



USAID
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GHANA

CASE STUDY

Clubs Keep Girls on Track in School

Cartoon character raises awareness among pupils on health and education



Photo: USAID/Ghana/Henry Akorsu

Members of Immaculate Conception Junior High School's Sara Club in Kpando, Ghana, are learning how to stay focused on education.

Through Sara Clubs, girls in Ghana are learning to freely share ideas and problems with their parents and teachers, and report cases of sexual harassment to teachers.

Telling Our Story
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Challenge

Esi, a teenager attending school in Ghana, faces many challenges as she struggles to complete her basic education. She feels shy asking or answering questions in class, and she is exposed to sexual exploitation by peers and adult males, which could result in pregnancy and/or HIV infection. Many Ghanaian girls like Esi face similar problems that affect their school performance and sometimes stop them from completing basic education.

Initiative

To help girls stay focused on education and effectively handle school and sexuality issues, USAID supported the expansion of a UNICEF project involving a fictional character named Sara. Through comic books and animated films, Sara was popularized among young people and educators as an adolescent role model promoting positive behavior. USAID sponsored trainings for educators to use Sara to address issues like sexual harassment, teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. Schools then organized Sara clubs at which girls and boys discussed together how Sara and her friends handled challenges. The clubs turned Sara's stories into plays, told the stories in local languages, and used her adventures in puppet shows. Club kits, including books, posters, videos and games, were produced to stimulate discussions and promote healthy and safe behavior.

Results

Sara clubs have raised awareness among youth, especially girls, about sexual relations and the importance of HIV/AIDS prevention. "We can be nice with boys, but when they start touching our breasts and thighs, we have to avoid them," said one girl, Edem. Girls are learning to freely share ideas and problems with their parents and teachers, and report cases of sexual harassment to teachers. In addition, girls are now confident in asking and answering questions in class. The project's slogan — "I know my goal" — has renewed interest in girls in education, and is contributing to keeping teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS rates low.